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FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4912
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAMA 001013

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DEPT FOR G/TIP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/05/2016
TAGS: [KCRM](#) [PHUM](#) [KWMN](#) [KHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SMIG](#) [BA](#) [HUMRIT](#)
BILAT
SUBJECT: BAHRAIN: 2006 TIP REPORT AND TIER 2 WATCH LIST
ACTION PLAN

REF: A. STATE 89065
[1](#)B. STATE 85592

Classified By: A/DCM Steve Bondy for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) Poloff delivered reftel demarches June 5 to MFA Human Rights Coordinator Ali Al Aradi, including Bahrain's 2006 TIP Report and the Tier 2 Watch List Action Plan. Al Aradi expressed optimism that two key items would be accomplished by year's end: passage of comprehensive anti-TIP legislation and the opening of the government shelter for victims of trafficking and other abuse. In a separate meeting, MFA Assistant Undersecretary Shaikh Abdul Aziz Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa was less optimistic about the six-month window for legislation to be passed due to the fall election schedule. In public comments Shaikh Abdul Aziz stated that government databases are being upgraded to track prosecutions and other statistics related to trafficking. In testimony before the Shura (Consultative) Council May 29, Minister of Social Development Dr. Fatima Al Balooshi stated that the Ministry would take possession of the building for the shelter on June 10, and the shelter will be operating at full capacity by the end of the calendar year. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) PolOff met with MFA Human Rights Coordinator Al Aradi June 5 to deliver reftel demarches consisting of the 2006 TIP report for Bahrain and the Tier 2 Watch List Action Plan for Bahrain. PolOff focused on the importance of both the passage of anti-TIP legislation and the opening of the shelter within the next six months for Bahrain to maintain its position on the Tier 2 Watch List.

MFA Optimism and Renewed Resolve

[1](#)3. (C) Al Aradi was optimistic that these two items would be accomplished in the time before Bahrain's re-evaluation. He stated that the Ministry of Social Development continued to make progress toward the opening of the shelter, and said that there was still an opportunity for the draft legislation to be passed from the Cabinet to the Council of Representatives (COR) before the close of the current legislative session. He added that there is wide agreement on the need for the law, so debate in the COR and passage could be quick.

[1](#)4. (C) Al Aradi said that the release of the TIP report and its attention to the shelter and the legislation will give fresh impetus to the inter-ministerial anti-TIP task force. It will provide ammunition to task force chairman Shaikh

Abdul Aziz to push the respective government players to address areas within their control. Al Aradi said that he would personally look into the details of the cases of the repatriated Thai women and seek clarification on the 92 cases forwarded to the Public Prosecutor's Office. Al Aradi admitted that Bahrain needs to improve its system of reporting statistics and expressed hope that current technological upgrades in the Ministry of Justice and Public Prosecutor's Office would yield results.

¶5. (C) In a separate meeting June 5 with Shaikh Abdul Aziz, A/DCM raised the public release of the TIP report. Shaikh Abdul Aziz was grateful for the six-month extension for the GOB to focus on opening the shelter and passing the anti-TIP law. However, he noted that the parliament would end its session fairly soon, and with elections approaching in the fall, he was less optimistic about parliament passing the law by December. He said that the government would push the law as far as possible given the realities of the end of the legislative session and elections. He suggested that post engage directly with Minister of Social Development Al Balooshi for progress on the shelter.

Public Statements from GOB, BCHR

¶6. (U) In public reactions to the report June 7, Shaikh Abdul Aziz said that Bahrain is committed to making progress in the fight against trafficking before the end of the year. In addition to passing legislation and opening a shelter, the capacity of government databases is being updated so that reports and statistics on trafficking and abuse will be available once legislation is passed and prosecutions under

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the new law commence. Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR, now dissolved) vice-president Nabeel Rajab publicly stated that the situation had improved since the formation of the anti-TIP inter-ministerial task force, but said that, although the GOB has been talking about it for two years, there is still no shelter. Regarding domestic workers, Rajab said that before being dissolved the BCHR submitted to the Ministry of Labor a proposed model work contract for domestic workers, drafted in coordination with a UN organization, that would protect them and prevent them from being trafficked. He claimed that the Ministry agreed to study the contract with the possibility of implementing it, but there has been no visible action.

¶7. (U) Minister Al Balooshi appeared before the Shura (Consultative) Council May 29 to address questions relating to progress on the shelter. Shura Council member and regional and international director of the Bahrain Human Rights Watch Society Faisal Fulad, whose society is campaigning for a comprehensive law protecting the rights of domestic laborers, directed the questions to the Minister. Minister Al Balooshi stated that the Ministry was to take possession of the building to be used for the shelter on June 10 and that the shelter will be fully operational by the end of the calendar year. The shelter will be able to accommodate up to 40 individuals. Officials from the Ministry have met with representatives of Bahraini NGOs to develop the shelter's by-laws. Current plans are for the shelter to be administered by a private sector institution. The Minister said that negotiations with this institution relating to operation of the shelter and training of its staff are ongoing.

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